

The Reverend Mr. Prince



Mr. Hancock's

SERMON

At the publick Lecture in *Boston*,

November 21. 1734.





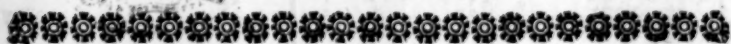
In the House of Representatives,

Veneris 22. Die Novembris, A. D. 1734.

ORdered, That the Representatives of the Town of *Boston*, with Capt. *Joseph Bowman* Representative of the Town of *Lexington*, desire of the Reverend Mr. *John Hancock* of *Lexington*, a copy of his Sermon preached in the publick Lecture yesterday in *Boston*, for the Press.



J. Quincy, Speaker,



THE
Prophet *Jeremiah's*

RESOLUTION

To get him unto Great Men, and
to speak unto them,

Considered and Applied :

IN

A S E R M O N

Delivered at the publick Lecture in

B O S T O N,

November 21. 1734.

Before His EXCELLENCY the GOVERNOUR,
and the GENERAL COURT.

By *John Hancock*, A. M.

Senior Pastor of the Church of CHRIST in *Lexington*.

N. B. Partly for brevity sake, and partly thro' the infirmity of an old man's memory, some things were omitted in the delivery of this Sermon, which are now added in the Publication, tho' they are but few.

B O S T O N : Printed by S. KNEELAND, Printer
to the Honourable House of Representatives.
MDCCLXXXIV.

Proprietor's

RESOLUTION

To the Hon. the Court of Sessions

in and for the County of

the City of London

A. S. E. R. M. O. N.

Sheweth that the said Court of Sessions

doth hereby

Resolved that the said Court of Sessions

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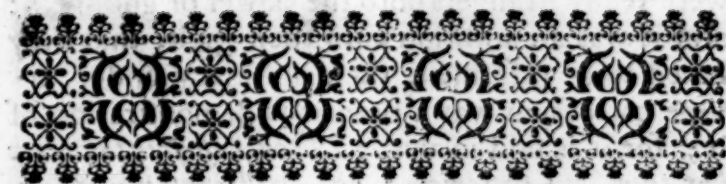
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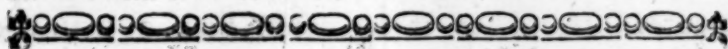
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The LORD's Prophets are to speak unto Great Men.



JEREMIAH V. 5.

— *I will get me unto the Great Men, and will
speak unto them.*

IN the days of the ministry of this Prophet *Jeremiah*, God's people were guilty of a grievous apostacy, and the corruption had made such a general spread thro' the Land, that few had escaped it. Therefore the Prophet is directed of God to go thro' the streets of Jerusalem, and to seek in the broad places thereof, and see if he could find a man, if there were any that executed Judgment, and sought the Truth: There were some indeed that made a goodly profession, and kept up a form of religion; they say, *the Lord liveth*; but the all-seeing God, whose eyes are upon the truth, did see their hypocrisy, and that they only seemed to be religious, but
were

were really strangers unto the power of godliness : and it was an addition unto their guilt, that they hated to be reformed, their obstinacy under divine correction was a notorious demonstration of it ; for it is said in ver. 3. *Thou hast smitten them but they have not grieved, thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction ; they have made their faces harder than a rock, they refused to return.*

In the Prophet's inquisition for truth, or for such as were truly godly, he goes first among the poorer sort, to see if he could find a man among them, but he could find none. Sometimes there is more serious religion among the poor, than among the rich ; the poorest of the flock, are the richest in grace. But it was not so here. He found nothing but ignorance, irreligion, and folly among them : *Then I said, surely these are poor, they are foolish, they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgments of their God. I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them.* He hoped to find things better among them : *Surely they have known the way of the Lord &c.* They are not so foolish and ignorant as the other, they know more, and do better : But behold the contrary. The poor were bad, and these were worse. The inferior people were ignorant and ungodly ; and men of a higher rank, the rich men and the great men were more so, they had altogether broken the yoke and burst the bonds. Thus as the Psalmist speaks, Men of low degree were vanity, and men of high degree were a lie, if laid in the balances together, and weighed as to any true religion they had, they were lighter than vanity.

That

are to speak unto Great Men.

That which is under our present consideration is, the Prophet's determination or resolution to go unto the Great men and speak unto them.

Eminency in grace makes men truly great, it makes men great in the eyes of the Lord ; but this was not the greatness here meant, for there was but little of this among them. There is an outward worldly greatness, a greatness in respect to riches. Thus *Isaac* grew till he was very great, *Gen.* 20. 13. And there is a greatness of power and authority. Thus the Prince of *Grecia*, *Daniel's* he-goat, as he is called, waxed very great in extent of power & dominion. So we read of the great men, & the rich men, & the mighty men, and the chief captains, in *Rev.* 6. 15. These the Prophet means, and of such he speaks when he says, *I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them.* And without any design to offend or flatter any of the great men of the Congregation, I would speak a few things unto them from these words, under this general head, *viz.*

That the Lord's Prophets must take proper opportunities, to speak unto great men as well as unto others, about their duty.

I will speak unto the great men ; About what? Not about matters of state, but religion. Not about their farms or their merchandize, but about their souls. Not about such things as are meerly temporal, but about the things that are spiritual and eternal.

The Lord's Prophets are to be remembrancers to them of their duty ; to tell them what they must do to be saved : to speak to them that they
may

may know the way of the Lord, and understand the judgments of their God.

Two things may here be considered.

I. Why great men must be spoken to as well as others ?

II. What may be said to them ?

I. Why must they be spoken to ?

i. Great men are a part of a minister's charge, and must be address'd to at proper seasons, and on proper occasions.

The ministers of Christ are to take heed unto all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made them the overseers ; and the great men in some congregations make up a considerable part of the flock.

Sometimes ministers have a particular call to go and stand before great men, before kings and governours, and to speak to them in the name of the Lord. There is some special service for God, or his people, which they are to be reminded of. They have some particular message from God to deliver to them ; as *Ebud* had unto *Eglon*, and they must not shun to deliver it, as they would be faithful unto God and unto men.

Thus the Prophets of God had an express commandment from the Lord of Hosts, to speak unto princes, and rulers, and the heads of the tribes. So God says to the Prophet, *Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word,*

word, and say, hear the word of the Lord, Jer. 22. 1. So *Moses* addresses the Princes of the congregation by the direction of the Lawgiver, and is sometimes sent unto *Pharaoh* to speak unto him. So, *Exod. 7. 15.* Get thee unto *Pharaoh* in the morning, and say, the Lord God of the hebrews hath sent me unto thee.

2. Because none of them are too great to be spoken to about their duty.

It is the greatest pride and vanity that can be, for any to think themselves too great to be spoken to about their duties to perform, or about their sins and their faults that they may amend them. However, ministers must speak to them in the name of the Lord, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

It was the pride of *Pharaoh's* heart to think himself too great to be admonished by *Moses* and *Aaron* about his duty. When they came to him, and said, *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let my people go that they may sacrifice unto me in the wilderness* : He insolently replies, *Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go. I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* It no ways becomes any men to talk so exceeding proudly, nor to suffer such arrôgancy to proceed out of their mouths. It had been a greater decency in that Egyptian king to have treated the messengers of the Lord of hosts with more veneration and respect, and to have paid that deference to them as the king of *Moab* did unto *Ebed*, when he came to him and said, *I have a message from God unto thee* ; the king out of reverence to the messenger or to the divine message, arose out of his seat.

3. Great men ought to know the way of the Lord, and understand the judgments of their God, as well as others.

It is of the greatest necessity unto them, to know the way of peace, and the divine counsels and methods of grace, that they may not be destroyed for lack of knowlege. They should also understand the judgments of their God, whether they be *judicia operis* that are here meant, the judgments of his hands, or *judicia oris*, the judgments of his mouth.

They may be men in authority themselves, and have servants under them, but they should remember that they also have a master in heaven, and that they ought to do obeisance unto him ; they should know their masters will and do it ; and they must be told what it is that the Lord doth require of them, even *to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with their God.* That they must bow the knee unto the most high, and must not think themselves too great to worship and bow down, yea kneel before the Lord their maker. They must not think much to submit unto every ordinance of God ; to worship him in the publick assemblies, and to worship him in their families. *Joshua* was a great man, captain general of all the armies of Israel ; and yet he says, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* And they ought not only to know the way of the Lord themselves, but to teach their households the way of the Lord also. *Abraham* was a great man, and yet God says of that man, *I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord.* And they should not think themselves
above

above reproof, and admonition, when there is occasion for it ; but should receive it with meekness and fear : tho' prudence and discretion must direct these admonitions ; for it is not meet, in a rude and malapart manner, to say to a ruler, *Thou art wicked, or to princes, ye are ungodly.*

3. Great men are not always wise.

So saith *Elibu*, Job 32. 9. *Great men are not always wise, nor do the aged understand judgment, therefore I said, bearken unto me.*

In the original it is read thus, *Great men are not wise* : But for as much as some great men have been famous for wisdom, therefore our translators to qualify the sense and meaning of the proposition, have inserted the word *always*, and so put it in a differing italick character in our Bibles, to shew it was not in the Hebrew ; and in this restrained and qualified sense, it is a great truth, that great men are not always wise ; whether it be meant of divine, or political wisdom.

For first, Great men are not always good : it would be well, it would be happy for all states and governments if they were. Indeed they ought to be good, yea to be the best of men, yet many times they are the worst, scourges to the world, and the plagues of mankind. See what this Prophet says in this verse of the great men in Jerusalem, *They have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds* ; broke loose from all the sacred bonds and ties they were under unto God. So how often do great men forget their obligations to their maker, act as if they

had lost all sense of decency and vertue ; they neither fear God, nor regard man ; they are bold in sin, and glory in their shame : they should be told, such glorying is not good. The apostle *James* tells them so, *Ye rejoyce in your boasting, all such rejoycing is evil.*

Nor secondly, are they always wise in a political sense. Indeed they had need be always wise, for they have great trusts committed unto them, great business lying upon their hands, affairs of state and government, which are full of intricacy and perplexity ; they had need be wise as an angel of God to discern both time and judgment : like the men of *Iffachar*, who had understanding in the times, to know what Israel ought to do.

Yet sometimes they manage as if God had deprived them of wisdom. Their advancement unto posts of honour does not infallibly carry an entail of wisdom along with it. There may be such a thing as an old and foolish King. So men rise in their estates, but their folly remains with them. *Nabal* had great possessions, but as his name was, so was the man. *Nabal* was his name, and folly was with him. By the mien of their deportment it is evident, that wisdom was not born with them ; and we presume that upon their demise, wisdom shall not die with them. Well did *Solomon* say, *Wisdom is good with an inheritance*, Eccl. 7. 11. And the marginal note as it stands in our bibles gives an emphasis to it, *Wisdom is as good as an inheritance, and better too.*

5. Great men if they could be perswaded to be wise and good, would prove singular blessings to the church, and to the world.

What great good may a wise and good ruler do unto a people? A whole government will fare the better for him. When *Mordecai* the Jew was made next unto the king in dignity and authority, it is said of him, that *he was great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the welfare of his people, and speaking peace unto all their seed*, *Esth.* 10. 3. And when very worthy deeds are done unto a people by their providence, it should be accepted always with all thankfulness both unto God and unto them.

And what good may men of great fortunes, as we say, do with their estates, if God give them a heart to it: they should be spoken to about it; that they may lay such pious and useful foundations, for which future generations may call them blessed: And when they have done good in *Israel* both towards God, and towards his house, to the promoting religion, the advancement of learning, or providing for the necessities of the poor; such generous benefactors to the world, will be had in everlasting remembrance, when the name of the wicked may rot.

6. Great men are too apt to neglect the care for their souls through the multiplicity of business, therefore they should be spoken to about them.

I have here no concernment with the doctrine of the equality of souls, nor with the vulgar notions

notions and sayings of men, that such a man is a man of a great soul, and of another they will say, he is a man of a little soul. I meddle no further with these than only to say, that all souls are equal as to their divine original, for thus saith the Lord, *All souls are mine*. They are also alike in immortality and duration, and are all of an equal inestimable value. Great men have souls too precious to be lost : Too precious to be drencht away in intemperance, or bartered away for a little money. They shou'd be told, their souls are as valuable as others, though they neglect them so, and in as much danger as others, if not more, though they are so careless about them. They shou'd be told, their souls are worth more than all their estates and their dignities, and that it's pity they should be lost for such perishing things as these, *Mat. 16. 26*.

We pass on to consider,

II. What may be said to them ?

And what is spoken must be chiefly about their souls ; for ministers watch for souls : not but that they may be able, and sometimes called to advise them in things of a secular nature, and may do it very much to their advantage. But it is chiefly about the concerns of their souls.

1. And here in the first place, It may be profitable to speak to them of the original of their greatness, and tell 'em who it is that hath made them to differ.

They are high, others are low, they are rich, others are poor : Did not Providence
make

make the difference ? If they have riches and great possessions, they must be told, it is God that gave them, or their ancestors, power to get wealth, that so they may not sacrifice unto their own net, or burn incense unto their own drag. If by their own diligent hands, under the conduct and blessing of providence, they are risen unto plentiful estates, they should show a religious gratitude unto God, and make proper returns to their great benefactor, and constantly govern themselves in all their trading and dealing by the rules of equity and righteousness, well knowing, that *he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and in the end shall be a fool*, Jer. 17. 11.

And if by personal merit and the favour of the Prince, they have attained to be set at the upper end of the government, or are put into any trust therein, they must be told that it is God that governs the world, and gives preferments unto whomsoever he will : He says to one man, Sit thou here in a high place, and to another, Stand thou there, or sit there at his footstool. And as God does not give men riches to spend them upon their lusts ; so he does not cloath men with authority, to put into their hands an opportunity to insult and domineer over their fellow creatures ; but to defend the poor and the needy, to protect the innocent and virtuous, to discountenance vice, and force iniquity to stop its mouth : and God that promotes them, observes how they manage. *God standeth in the congregation of the mighty ; he judgeth among the gods.*

2. They should be told, that they ought to be very humble.

Before

Before honour is humility, says the wise man, (*Prov. 15. 33.*) and it should be after it too. And yet you may see some persons, when their riches are increased, or when the Government has promoted them, assume an air of pride and defiance, and look with too much contempt and scorn upon their inferiors: it shews the vanity of their minds. And *Solomon* has given them their name; *Proud and haughty scorner is their name.* And if men do not despise them for it, which they are very apt to do, yet God will; for he knows the proud afar off. What is a more ornamental grace for great men, than humility: and yet the prophet *Isaiab* mentions it as a fault and a dishonour unto the great men of his day, that they humbled themselves, *Isai. 2. 9.* And so it was indeed in the sense he spake it. For he had just been speaking of the idols of silver and gold, which they made for themselves, and when they were made, he says, *The mean man boweth down to them, and the great man humbleth himself.* For the mean men to do it, for the poor to be so foolish as to do it, was dishonourable; but for the great men to do it, to bow down to the works of their own hands, to that which their own fingers had made, was to act very much below themselves; it was base and unmanly, a stoop below the dignity of a rational creature, they could not do it without humbling themselves, and reproaching not only their maker, but their own reason and sense. They had acted the more manly part, if they had cast these idols unto the moles and to the bats, as the prophet there speaks, in the 20th. verse: *The fittest companions for such as have eyes and see not; as idols are described, Psal. 115.* It is one thing for a man to humble himself before God, and
another

another thing to humble himself to an Idol. As ever you would secure your honour and your greatness, be ye cloathed with humility; for *a man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit*, Prov. 29. 23.

3. They may be told, that the way to be truly great, is to be really and truly good.

That reputation and preferment which is the reward of merit, of vertue and piety, is the most eligible. Religion certainly can be no disparagement to a Gentleman: Nor can it by any means be supposed, that it disqualifies a person for any posts, no not the highest in the Army; or in the Government. When God chose out a man to be captain over Israel, he chose *Joshua* the son of *Nun*, a man that had followed the Lord fully; and *Moses* was one of God's choicest friends, high in God's favour for his amiable vertues, when God made him king in *Jesurun*. 'Tis religion and grace that beautifies the soul, and makes a man all glorious within, that brightens his character and conversation, and is the true wisdom that makes his face to shine. It makes them the best as well as the greatest of men; and men of renown in the congregation. Such a one was *Job*, the best as well as the greatest of all the men of the East; *a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil*.

This too is the ornament of the daughters of Zion, and their glory; and after this manner in old time, the holy women also who trusted in God, adorned themselves, not with wearing of gold, and putting on apparel; but with that which is infinitely more valuable, the truth of
C grace

grace first planted in the heart, and beauteous and most conspicuous in the life. Accordingly the Holy Ghost takes notice of the devout and honourable women among the Greeks, who were the humble followers, and worshippers of Jesus, whose modesty, humility, and unaffected piety, was very exemplary. Among whom *Lydia* was one, for she is called *Sebonene*, a worshipper of God, *Act. 16. 14.* And there is a notable hint from some expressions in that chapter, as if these godly matrons, had their religious meetings to pray together; for says the apostle there, *We went out of the city by a river side, to a place where prayer was wont to be made, ---and spake unto the women which resorted thither:* As if it were a place of religious resort for them. Some such religious Societies have been in our days. And I am able to say, there is a very honourable Governour, and some reverend Ministers here present before the Lord, who descended from such devout and worshipping women, whose frequent practice it was on the sixth day of the week (Good Friday shall I call it) to resort to a place for prayer, not far from a river side, a place of note in that day for that religious resort: I have not only seen it with mine eyes, but my ears have heard one of the godly mothers in Israel, in the absence of the father of the family, serving God day and night with her household.

As their religion was an honour to them, so 'tis an honour to be descendants from them, and much more to be followers of them as dear children, wherein they followed Christ. May all such inherit the same serious spirit of piety, and esteem it their crown, and their diadem. Should they cast off the religion of their ancestors, and
shew

shew a spirit of indifferency or disrespect unto it, they would be in utmost danger of being rejected of God ; if there be truth in what *David* told his son *Solomon*, *If thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever* : or weight in what the Lord God of Israel said unto *Samuel*, *Them that honour me, I will honour, but such as despise me, shall be lightly esteemed*, 1 Sam. 2. 30.

And if I should humbly put your EXCELLENCY in remembrance, as the apostle did *Timothy*, of the unfeigned faith that dwelt in his grand-mother *Lois*, and in his mother *Eunice* ; and as he says, *I am perswaded in thee also* ; it is to stir up the gift of God in thee, the spirit and power of religion, and of love, and of a sound mind.

And in as much as my text leads me to speak unto the great men, and because there is none greater in this house than your EXCELLENCY, I would take leave to say, that the great GOD, who is the Governour among the nations, has promoted you to this great honour, to be the Head of the princefs of the Provinces ; and you are under God and the King, the light of our eyes, the breath of our nostrils, the anointed cherub that covereth, under whose shadow we hope to live among the heathen ; therefore fear God, honour the king, endear your self to your country, the place of your kindred, and nativity, and the land of your fathers sepulchres, by a wife and steady administration, and by the strictest adherence unto the religion of your ancestors ; so may you get to your self a name like unto the name of the great and good men upon the earth. Apply your superior powers and opportunities to procure all possible favours for this People before

the King and his Council : and let the glory and interest of *New England* be always as dear to you as Jerusalem's was to *David*, and lie as near your heart as that did unto his, and say, as Psal. 137. 5, 6. *If I forget thee, O New England, let my right hand forget her cunning ; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth ; if I prefer not the peace of New England above my chief joy.*

4. The Lord's prophets should speak to them to be patterns of good works, and happy examples of all the amiable virtues of the christian life.

For if they should from the looseness of their principles, indulge themselves in base and dishonourable practises, it will have a fatal influence upon their dependants, and tempt them and others to run into all excess of riot. If they will drink, and swear, and game, in contempt of God, and religion, in defiance to the rules of temperance & sobriety, in defiance of all the laws of the Land, and the ministers of Justice in it, and will be so daring and presumptuous to confront the royal repeated Proclamations against these scandalous immoralities, what will the succeeding generation say, but as they in the next chapter but one to our context, *We are delivered to do all these abominations.*

You may read in our context at your leisure ; but if you read in it with observation, you will find that the great men in Jerusalem were very bad men, and set very corrupt examples ; when God fed them to the full, then they committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the barrels

lots houses, ver. 7, 8. And when they were solemnly told from the Lord by this prophet what would be the dreadful issue : *They belied the Lord, and said, It was not he.* And that these were some of the great men appears, from ver. 27, 28. *They are become great, and waxen rich, they are waxen fat, yea they shine, and they overpass the deeds of the wicked.* And this had a dreadful tendency to corrupt and debauch the city, and bring down the vengeance of God upon it : And they could not reasonably look for any thing else, when 'tis said, *Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord ? and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this ?*

Therefore the Lord's prophets must speak unto the great men that they be directed by the apostle, *to do whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report ; and if there be any virtue, or if there be any praise, to think on these things*, Phil. 4. 8.

If the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, have any earnest desire to stop the progress of vice and infidelity, and to give religion and morality a due recommendation, I believe the most effectual way to it, is, to take this poor degenerate people by the hand, and gently and sweetly lead them into the paths of virtue by their own laudable examples : It's hopeful this would have a happy tendency to set forward a reformation of manners among their inferiors, both in town and country, and so from this great Town, not prophaneness, but a reformation would go forth into all the Land. And where there are such sons of Belial as will know no restraint, and are so rough and untractable, that

that he that would touch them must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear ; let such as are in authority show them, that they do not bear the sword in vain, and that they dare confront these sons of violence : And let them put on zeal with their cloaks, and go to and fro thro' the streets of the city, and search not only in the broad places, but in the secret haunts thereof ; if they may discover the abominations that they do in the dark, and see what they can do to reform the disorders that are in the midst thereof, that so every one that *stealeth* may be cut off as on this side, and every one that *sweareth*, may be cut off as on that side ; that you may be henceforth called a *city of righteousness, a faithful city*. Come now and let us see your zeal for the Lord of hosts.

Furthermore, if they would be patterns of good works, they should be told, they must be charitable. Yea says the apostle, *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works* &c. I remember the gloss of that great man *Hugo Grotius* here. The apostle, says he, had just drawn this epistle to a conclusion in the 16th. verse ; and so it should seem by the reading : but calling to mind, that there were a great number of rich merchants in *Ephesus* who needed such an exhortation to charity, he inserts two or three verses to excite their liberalities, and then tells them that hereby they might lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, and lay hold on eternal life, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17, 19.

And they may be assur'd from the Spirit of God, that all their good works shall follow them.
God

God knows their works and their charity, and is not unrighteous to forget them : and the Spirit pronounces the blessedness of those whose works have been good before God, and directs the divine apostle to write it for a memorial in this book ; Rev. 14. 13. *Write, blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth, for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.* And tho' they may not be told that their good works are meritorious, yet they may be safely told, that they shall be rewarded according to the qualities and degrees of them ; and that upon the foundation of the doctrine of the degrees of glory, they may humbly hope that the more they have done for God, and his glory, for his servants and people, the greater shall be their reward in heaven.

5. They should be told, that *not many rich, not many mighty are called.*

The apostle tells them as much, 1 Cor. 1. 26. Not to discourage but quicken their pursuit after glory and vertue : not to weaken their hands, but to awaken their hearts, their cares and endeavours.

As for men that have plentiful estates, they are too apt to boast in their wealth, and trust in the multitude of their riches ; when they have goods laid up for many years, they will rest in them with a carnal security, and say, *I shall die in my nest, and multiply my days as the sand.* When they are full, they are apt to forget God, and say, *Who is the Lord ?* So that it may be of service to them, as well as a duty in the Lord's prophets, to tell them of their danger : How
apt

apt they are, that are so cumbred with the world, to neglect the *one thing needful*; how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, comparatively as hard as for a camel to pass thro' the eye of a needle: and therefore that their utmost caution is needful, least as it sometimes happens, that *riches prove to the hurt of the owners thereof*, so their prosperity should prove like the prosperity of fools that does destroy them.

6. They should be told, that they must die, and leave their estates to others.

Yea, they know it already, why else do they build tombs and desolate houses for themselves in the place of dead mens skulls. But something more must be done, before you can comfortably remove into that land of forgetfulness. You must get into Christ, and then you shall enter into peace: *They shall rest in their beds*, every one that has walked in his uprightness.

When death comes it will strip you of all your honours and riches, and leave you naked & bare. So said that great man, Job. 1. 21. *Naked came I out of my mothers womb, and naked shall I return thither again.* It will remove the crown, and take off the diadem, and send princes away spoiled. *I have said, ye are gods indeed; but ye shall die like men.* You are mortal as others, and shall become weak as other men: It would be good for you to think so: and unless you consider your latter end, and provide for your selves in the mansions that are above, you will be loth to die, and leave your great houses, and pleasant seats, and fair estates behind you. *Hæc sunt quæ nos invitos faciunt mori.*

7. They

7. They are to be told, they must be accountable to their Lord.

They are but stewards, and God will call them all one after another to give an account of their stewardship, for they must be no longer stewards. You have a great deal more to account for than others have; your talents are ten to anothers one: a talent of wealth, and a talent of power. God will inquire what you have done with them. And if you have buried them slothfully, or used them sinfully and unprofitably, how will you be able to hold up your faces unto God?

8. They are to be told, that the least degree of grace is preferable unto the greatest degrees of wealth; and if they don't think so, 'tis because they are under the prejudices of a corrupted judgment.

This is the principal thing, this is the true riches; this is the pearl of great price, and a man had better sell all that he has, to purchase it, than go without it. This is durable riches and righteousness; there is real intrinsick value in it. And did we understand the true value thereof, we should account all other things as dross, or dung in comparison of it.

We may make some estimate of its worth by two things. They that dye without it are certainly and eternally undone; and they that have it would not part with it for all the treasures upon earth. They that have it need nothing else to make them happy, and they that miss of it, will learn the worth of it at the dearest rate that can be: When they shall be found crying in their

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apt they are, that are so cumbred with the world, to neglect the *one thing needful* ; how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, comparatively as hard as for a camel to pass thro' the eye of a needle : and therefore that their utmost caution is needful, least as it sometimes happens, that *riches prove to the hurt of the owners thereof*, so their prosperity should prove like the prosperity of fools that does destroy them.

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last distress and agony, with those negligent foolish virgins, *Give us of your oyl, for our lamps are gone out.*

Thus I have instanced in a few things, what the prophets of God may profitably say unto the great men.

I would just say a word to the poor, and two to the rich and great, and so dismiss you.

1. And first to the poor.

The prophet found the poor in Jerusalem to be foolish, and ignorant ; *They know not the way of the Lord* : If the poor in the town are so, their case is to be pitied, and considered ; and they should hearken unto the voice of their teachers, and incline their ears unto those that would instruct them ; least they mourn at the last : but if they be rich in faith, they shall be heirs of the kingdom, as well as the great men. For there is no respect of persons with God. Therefore do not envy them their greatness, nor repine at your own meanness ; keep the way of the Lord, and fret not thy self in any wise. *Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily you shall be fed.* Be quiet and easy under the present distributions of providence ; do not quarrel with the almighty, and say, *The ways of the Lord are not equal* : *Be content with such things as you have* ; as knowing he hath said, *I will never leave you nor forsake you.* You see some under better circumstances than you are, and you may see some under meaner ; there are some that are poorer than you, and are greater sufferers than you are : Is your drink small ? others drink water. Is your drink water ?
others

others drink blood. Do you drink blood ? others drink damnation.

2. To the rich and great, I would say,

1. Be you willing to hear and receive what is spoken unto you in the name of the Lord.

Hear ye and give ear, be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken. If we speak nothing unto you, but what the Lord hath spoken unto us, and charged us to say in his name, then you ought to hearken unto it. It is charged as a great fault in king *Zedekiah*, 2 Chron. 36. 12. that he *humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet, speaking from the mouth of the Lord.* This is there called among others, an evil thing in the sight of the Lord. But was that such a great fault, that he humbled not himself before *Jeremiah* ? Was not *Zedekiah* a greater man than *Jeremiah* ? *Zedekiah* was a king, and *Jeremiah* was his subject : and subjects must stoop to their sovereigns, and not their sovereigns unto them. Its true, *Zedekiah* in his political capacity was a greater man than *Jeremiah*, but *Jeremiah* in his prophetic office, at least in the execution of it at this time, was a greater man than *Zedekiah*, tho' he was a king. And this was his fault that he humbled not himself before *Jeremiah* the prophet ; especially considering him as a prophet at that time speaking to him from the mouth of the Lord.

2. Always maintain a great veneration for religion.

Labour to know the way of the Lord, and keep it. Keep up the reputation, the life, and power of religion in your day, and in your places,

ces, in your hearts and in your families ; for this is your life, and in doing this thing, you shall prolong your days in the land God has given you for a possession : And while there is a great number of holy ones in the land, God will not write *Loammi* upon us. But then family religion must be kept up, or else what will be the fate of the next generation, even to be given up as *Ephraim* and *Israel* was, and to be made like unto *Admah*, and *Zeboim*.

Lay a good foundation for them by your religious care in their education, and by your virtuous and regular living ; lead them, and learn them to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And let it not be said of you as of indulgent *Eli*, that *his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not*. This laid them under that ignominious character, *Now the sons of Eli were sons of belial, they know not the Lord*.

Advise them, admonish them, pray over them, send and sanctify them, and rise up every morning and offer a burnt offering according to the number of them all, thus did *Job* continually : for says he, *it may be my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts* ; or as some read it, *It may be they have sinned, and taken their leave of God*. Would you leave your riches and honours and greatness to your children ; let them be fitted for it by a liberal if you can, but to be sure by a virtuous education : That your families may flourish in the earth ; *that your sons may be as plants grown up in their youth, and your daughters be as corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace*. Blessed is the man who has his
quiver

quiver full of them. And may none of them have any reason to complain, or lame at least, as *Austin* did, My father's care was rather to make me great, than to make me good ; to make me a scholar, and not a christian.

It has been the eternal scandal of some of the great men upon the earth, that they have been men of little or no religion, they have lived very much without God in the world : 'tis they that have given occasion to some to say, that a little religion goes a great way with Gentlemen : and it has been their reproach, that they have allowed themselves in unpardonable immoralities. *But he that purgeth himself from these, shall be a vessel of honour fit for his masters use.*

And thanks be to God that there is a choice number of such in this great Town, and elsewhere ; and so many filling up this congregation this day ; yet there is room : May these publick Lectures abound with hearers, that this house may be full, as it use to be forty years ago.

Indeed the glory and capacity of this house is greater than the former ; but is not the Town enlarged in proportion ? why is there not a proportionable number of hearers ? Not for want of people in the town, but alas for want of affection to the house of God : Where is our zeal and our strength ? Mens zeal to the world, has eat up their zeal for religion ; one goes to his trade, and another to his merchandize, and the house of God is comparatively empty. Strange ! that out of so many large congregations as are in the town, there should not come enough to make up one full assembly. When we look into the exchange,
or

or shops, into the streets and broad places of the city, and behold the multitudes there, and look into this house, and see how few there are here on these days, one would think there was a shameful decay of religion in the town, and mens love to the house of God was grown cold. Were the house of God turned into a house of merchandize, should we not see the faces of a great many here, that now turn their backs upon the Lecture? Oh! *Tell it not in Gath.*

When the tribes come up, the tribes of the Lord unto the testimony of Israel, how good and how pleasant a thing to see the Heads of the tribes leading them up thither. May our great men be more exemplary herein; and do what you can to revive the credit of religion by your good conversation in Christ. The authority of your example will be a means to bring vice into disgrace, and give a reputation unto vertue. And you may be the happy instruments under God of restoring the dying religion of the day. You'll repair the decays of it, and raise up the foundations of many generations. Unto all which I will add, you shall be among the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

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